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Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Receives New Tool for Emergency Response and Training

Big Stone Gap, Va. — There is a new tool in Virginia for emergency response at coal mines. The Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) now has an Emergency Response and Small Mine Safety Training trailer.

With this new tool, DMME responders will be able to communicate with assisting agencies and provide a video signal from the mine over a secure internet site. This will ensure that DMME has communication between those at the emergency and others that are helping from DMME's office or those that need information for family and media briefings. New technology in this trailer will also send information to DMME responders about the location of rescuers that have to go in an underground mine and on the conditions inside.

Mine Chief Randy Moore says this new tool will make a difference in DMME emergency response and investigations. "Communication is key in any emergency, especially at a mine site. This state of the art equipment makes sure we can not only keep in touch with our experts at the office but also with assisting agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration. This improvement in communication could make the difference in a life-saving operation."

While the Emergency Response Trailer is designed for mine emergencies, DMME will make it available for any emergency situation in which the agency might be needed.

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This trailer will also serve as a traveling classroom to mine sites owned by companies that may not have a safety training program for their employees. Training such as electrical, diesel and retraining classes can be offered to miners either on site, or remotely through the trailer.

DMME was able to purchase the trailer with a grant the agency received from the Mine Safety and Health Administration. The Emergency Response and Small Mine Safety Training trailer system cost approximately \$200,000.

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